

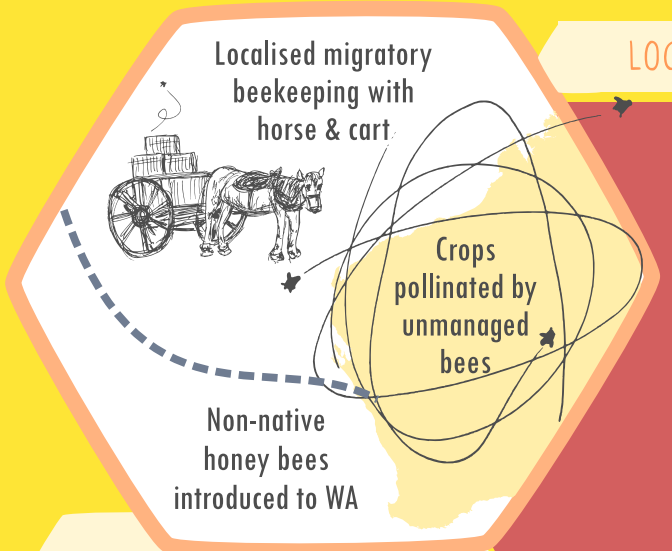
# Beekeeping in WA.

Industry evolution with changing  
resource security in Western Australia.

**Pre-1829** Indigenous practice of **Caring for Country** with sustainable, low disturbance land management.

INSIGHTS INTO FLORAL RESOURCE USE BY  
COMMERCIAL BEEKEEPERS IN THE  
SOUTHWEST REGION

Swan Settlers  
Cooperative &  
Wescobee  
established to  
market &  
distribute honey  
in bulk.



## LOCAL BEEKEEPING

**1830s - 1920s**

Early beekeeping is **stationary & localised** near settlements. The timber industry **exploits old growth forests** for exports & land is cleared for agriculture. Swarms from honeybee hives result in unmanaged bee populations establishing in native bushlands & pollinating crops. A reduction of mature overstorey & widespread logging debris intensifies **wildfire** conditions. The loss of bee forage prompts **migration of hives** using horse & cart to increase honey production. Large-scale **bee farms** are established across the southwest where eucalypt woodland areas provide reliable annual nectar flows.

**Bushfire, forest & beekeeping regulations are legislated to improve management of natural resources and their dependent industries.**

Bush Fires Act 1885 · Beekeepers' Act 1899 · District Fire  
Brigades Act 1909 · Health Act 1911 · Forests Act 1918

**1930s - 1960s**

## COMMERCIAL BEEKEEPING

Extensive clearing of woodlands in the agricultural wheatbelt pushes beekeepers to become truly **migratory**. The advent of vehicles & road expansion mobilises beekeepers to access **distant flowering events** in the forests, woodlands & coastal heath. Industry participation grows and productivity increases, with surplus honey **exported overseas**. The state government administers **apiary site permits** to manage beekeeper access on public lands & reduce biosecurity risks. Fire disasters shift management practices from fire exclusion to **prescribed burning**.



**Beekeeping acts are refined to address biosecurity, resource access & food health concerns. Bushfire management approaches evolve through legislation.**

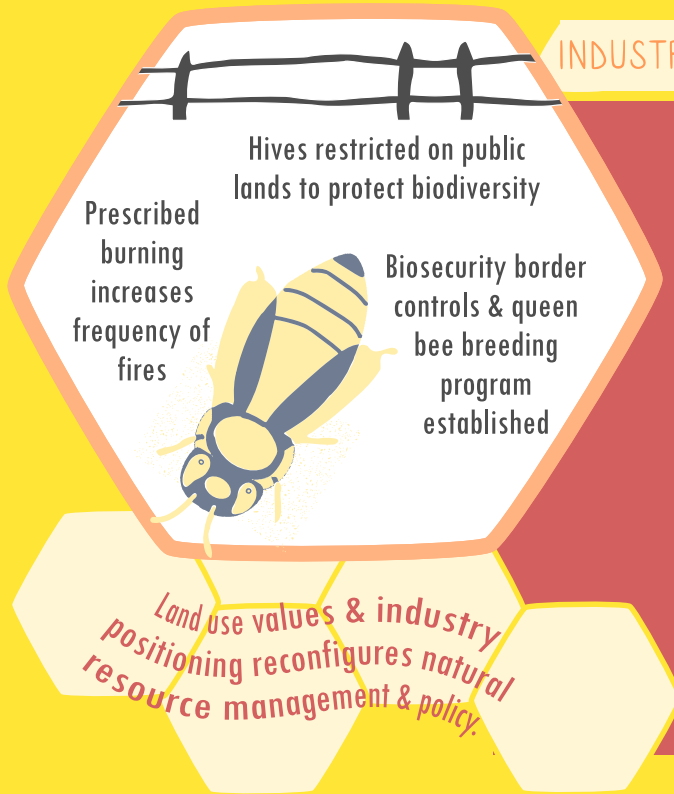
Bees Act 1930 · Lands Act 1933 · Bushfires Act 1937 · Bee Industry Compensation  
Act 1953 · Honey Pool Act 1953 · Bush Fires Act 1954 · Beekeepers Act 1963

WA Honey Pool  
& WA Apiarist  
Society created.  
Australian  
Honey Board  
promotes  
research &  
marketing.  
Department of  
Agriculture  
leads honeybee  
research.

Organisations develop with Beekeeping Section of WA Farmers Federation, Western Australian Beekeepers Association (WABA), Bee Industry Council WA (BICWA), Beekeeper Consultative Committee (BCC) & Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC)

## INDUSTRY UNDER PRESSURE

1970s - 2000s



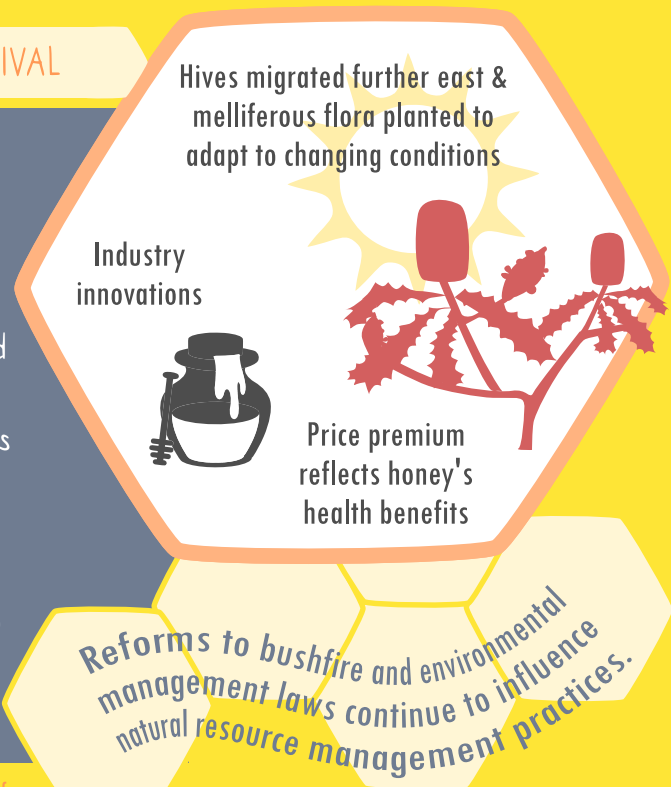
Land use conflict warrants controls to manage society's emerging **competing interests & values**. Creation of conservation reserves with **restricted beekeeper access** result from questions around honeybee threats to biodiversity. Mounting pressures (climate, fire, logging) impact resource quality & quantity with many concerns voiced at a new **bee industry forum**. Resource access issues increase hive migration distances. Associated travel costs & low honey prices force beekeepers to leave industry as export markets decline. Incursion of viruses & pests in northern WA cause industry concern.

Conservation and Land Management (CALM) Act 1984 · CALM - Policy Statement No. 41 - Beekeeping on Public Land 1992 · Native Title Act 1993 · Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998 · Competition Policy Review of CALM Act 1999 · Regional Forest Agreement 1999 · Forest Products Act 2000 · Standard apiary site conditions 2000

2010s - 2020

## INDUSTRY REVIVAL

Threats to global honeybee populations lead to higher honey prices & public support for 'saving the bees'. The WA bee industry develops a new **value proposition** for premium mono-floral bioactive honeys while pollination services demand increases. **Higher market values** attract investors, new hobbyists & commercial beekeepers to the industry. **Tradable** public apiary permits increase asset values for businesses with access to quality resources. Nectar flows & resource access continue to decline due to climate change, fire regimes, logging & mining impacting the health of sensitive biodiverse ecosystems.



Conservation and Land Management Amendment Regulations (No. 2) 2010 · Office of Bushfire Risk Management 2012 · Biodiversity and Conservation Act 2016



The State government announced the cessation of native timber logging in public forests (with some exceptions) for the 2024-2033 Forest Management Plan. Resource security for beekeepers is achieved when the bee industry sustains equitable access to healthy mature native vegetation, which enables high value products & pollination services, enhancing agricultural productivity.

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